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VISIONS



THOMAS DURLEY LANDELS

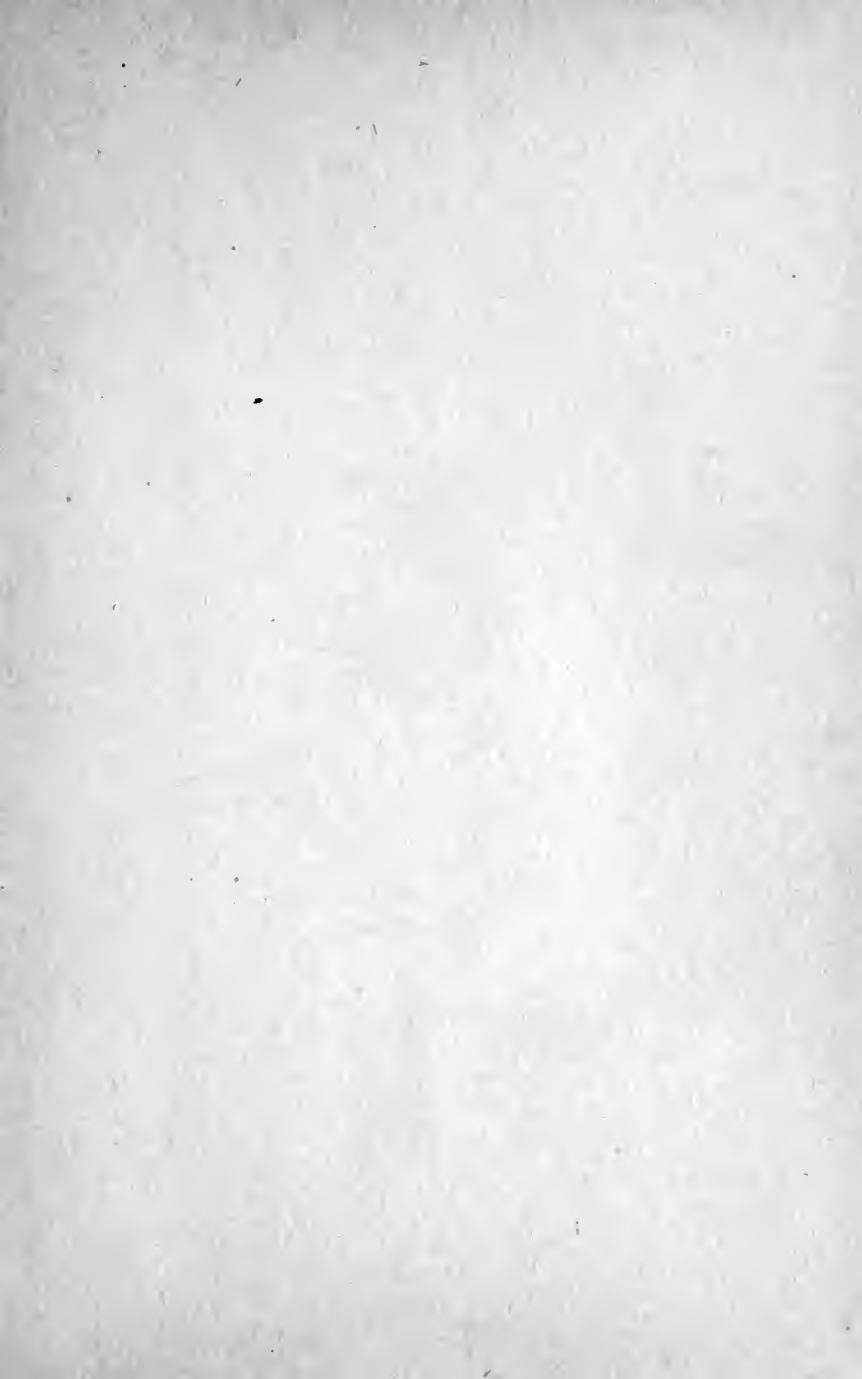


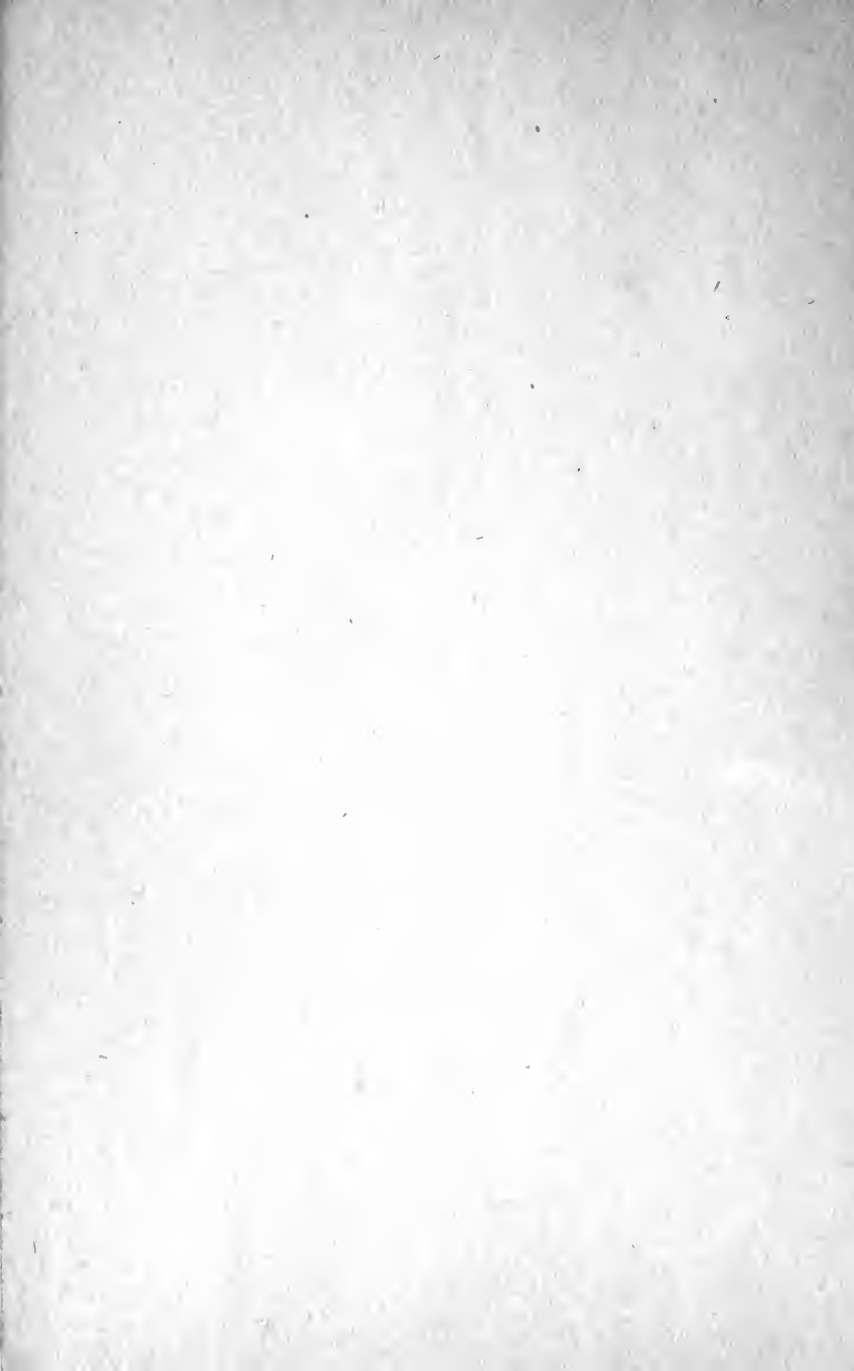
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VISIONS

BY

THOMAS DURLEY LANDELS



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TO
MY WIFE



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PRELUDE

MY HEART is like a cage in which
A thousand song-birds sing and fly;
They seek to burst their bars and cleave
Their flight unhindered thro' the sky!

Eternity throbs in their breasts,
Their songs are echoes of the stars!
And, filled with longings infinite,
They beat their pinions 'gainst the bars!

Their songs are oft replete with joy,
But sometimes sad and full of tears.
I seek to clothe their notes in words,
That they may live thro' coming years!

But though with richest harmony
Their music ever fills my breast,
'Tis seldom I can pour it forth
In words and numbers fitly drest!

VISIONS

Soul of mine, what hearest thou
In the silent hours,
When all outward sense is stilled
And the dews of thought distilled
On the fragrant flowers—
Soul of mine, what hearest thou?

Soul, what whispers come to thee
From the mystic spaces,
When the doorways open stand
And from out the shadow-land
Smile the spirit faces,—
Soul, what whispers come to thee?

Soul, what secrets learnest thou
Of the great Tomorrow,
When the sky is dark with cloud
And the tempest's voice is loud
In the night of sorrow—
Soul, what secrets learnest thou?

Soul, what visions rise for thee
When the stars shine brightly,
When the music of the spheres
Seems to fill the conquering years
And the days move lightly—
Soul, what visions rise for thee?

Soul of mine, what touch divine
Thrills thine inmost being,
In the dark and in the light,
When the spirit's chastened sight
Sees beyond all seeing—
Soul of mine, what touch divine?

SONG

THOU hast smiled on me, thou hast smiled on
me,

Thou hast smiled on me, my love!
The birds are singing more merrily,
The sky is bluer above!

The sun shines brighter than yesterday,
All nature is filled with light;
The evening is fairer. A happy day
Gives place to a happier night.

Thou hast smiled on me, thou hast smiled on me;
All nature is smiling too!
How green is the grass! How thankfully
It drinks in the evening dew!

The clouds are merry. The starry sphere
Is dancing around with glee;
The world is brimming with festive cheer,
Because thou hast smiled on me!

THE TWO VOICES

I HEARD a voice that said, "Come, eat and
drink,
Child of the clay; tomorrow thou must die:
Take what of good the gods may send, nor
think
To drain life's chalice dry!

"Let others mourn the sinful past, or fear
The storm-stroke of the hours as yet unborn;
Fill thou each passing day with mirth and
cheer
And laugh all grief to scorn!"

I answered, "Nay; God's sky is overhead,
God's stars with patient eyes look down on
me;
And round me, like the murmurings of the
dead,
I hear a boundless sea!

"Like reeds that whisper in a viewless air,
Like flow'rs that drink the dew of summer
skies,
To mystic influences and visions rare
My spirit open lies!

“ Deep beyond deep, I touch life’s mystery,
And voices hear from other worlds unknown.
O soul of mine, lift up thine eyes on high,
Nor live for joy alone! ”

DEBT

THE night was dark ; I stumbled in the way,
And, wounded, bleeding, I my grief out-
poured,
“ O cruel Master ! ” But He answered, “ Nay,
What owest thou thy Lord ? ”

The sun shone bright ; 'midst flower and sing-
ing bird,
With mirthful feet I trod the way so broad,
Careless and happy, till a voice I heard,
“ What owest thou thy Lord ? ”

What owe I ? Lord, my life, my all I owe !
Two piercéd hands, a bleeding brow abhor'd,
A wounded side, buffet and cruel blow,
These owe I to my Lord !

What owe I ? This, to serve Thee every day,
To consecrate each thought, and deed, and
word,
My every gift at thy dear feet to lay,—
This owe I to my Lord.

A CHIN

DAINTILY moulded, soft and fair,
Saucily dimpled here and there;
White as the newly-fallen snow
Tinted and flushed with pinky glow!

Lines full of beauty wrap it round,—
Lines like the harmony of sound,
Rising and falling, music sweet,
Curving and waving till they meet!

Perfect in outline, soft to touch,
Scarce can its form be praised too much;
Two rosy lips above bedeck,
Underneath it a slender neck!

Skilful the hand to wield the knife,
Moulding the marble as sweet as life;
Phidias, come, I challenge thee,
Make me a chin as fair to see!

THE DEATH OF CAIN

I

HE lay a-dying, a-dying, a-dying,
 Stretched out on the yellow sand,
And the sea-birds above him flying
 In the twilight from over the land
Wailed thro' the air with plaintive cries,
 "Alas, he dies!"

II

And the sea moaned low,
And the rocks below
Sobbed at the kiss of the sluggish wave.
And the sky loomed gray,
And the dying day
Solemnly gloamed o'er its ocean-grave!

III

A-dying, a-dying he lay;
And the wind went wailing by;
And the sorrowful rain began to fall,
And the white mist swept like an icy pall;
And lo, from the distant sky,
Where unseen birds did fly,
A wierd and ghostly cry
Fell, calling his soul away!

IV

And he knew that cry, and awoke,
 And opened his glazing eyes once more,
 Vacant and senseless with blank despair;
 But as he gazed thro' the murky air,
 Terror and horror gathered there;
 And lo, from his bloodless lips there broke
 A shriek so piercing the barren shore
 Echoed it far over sea and land;
 And sleepers shuddered and turned in their
 sleep,
 And children cried, and awoke,
 And women began to weep!

Stark and cold he lay on the sand;
 For in that shriek his spirit took flight
 And passed—into the night!

COMMUNION

I TALK with birds and trees ;
I hold sweet converse with the sunny air,
I whisper to the passing breeze ;
I feel a viewless presence everywhere !

To him who loves her well
Great nature is instinct with mystic life ;
She doth her inmost secrets tell
To him who woos her as a gracious wife !

Two faces doth she wear :
For him who loves her not, whose heart is
cold,
Dull, glassy eyes with vacant stare,
As blank and senseless as the Sphinx of old !

For him who humbly seeks
With reverent love to spell life's mysteries,
She moves and lives, she laughs and speaks,
She smileth back thro' grass, and flowers, and
trees !

Love nature well, and lo,
No longer dumb, she hath a living voice.
Midst summer-dews and winter's snow,
Midst buds or falling leaves, she cries, Re-
joice !

No smallest thing is base:
No blade of grass, no little mossy stone,
No worm or fly in lowliest place,
But hath a grace and beauty of its own!

One purpose runs thro' all,—
A golden chain to bind the whole in one;
One life divine in great and small,
In dust or dewdrop, planet, star or sun!

And over all, one God
Whose vesture is the beauteous world, whose
power
Streams down thro' every stone and clod,
And lives again in every opening flower!

And so I still will talk
With kindly nature, for I ever hear
Sweet voices round me as I walk,
And one dear Voice which whispers, "I am
here."

Where'er my feet may roam,
'Tis still my Father's roof that shelters me;
Each spot of earth is still my home,
Or lonely mountain-top or trackless sea!

THE CATHEDRAL

THE old cathedral reared its mighty mass
Fair and sublime. I pressed the oaken door
And entered awe-struck. Thro' the deep-
 stained glass
The evening twilight slanted on the floor

And on the pillars, bathing marble saints
In rosy glory like the flush of health,
And on the kneeling forms of suppliants,
And on the altar with its golden wealth!

In the faint light the archéd roof looks dim
And strange and vast; and one can almost
 see,
As 'bove the spread wings of the cherubim,
A formless form that broods there silently!

The deep'ning shadows gath'ring here and
 there
Make the deep silence deeper, till no noise
Save some stray footstep, stirs the hushéd
 air! —
But hark! the organ wakes and lifts its voice;

Thro' the vast dome the pealing music rolled,
Waking the echoes in each sculptured nook;
Thro' nave, thro' crypt, and thro' the clois-
ters old,
It slowly streamed, till e'en the basement
shook!

"Glory to God," the organ seemed to cry;
And every tall and stately pillar then
That rose majestic towards the distant sky,
Gave answer thro' the gath'ring gloom,
"Amen" !

SONG

GENTLE breezes, waft my sigh
To that bright and sunny shore,
Waft it to my love, and lie
In her bosom evermore!

Rippling wavelets, bear my song,
Bear it in your accents sweet,
Bear it, bear it swift along,
Lay it at my loved one's feet!

Snowy seagulls, hear my prayer,
Circling in the azure sky,
Bear it, bear it thro' the air,
Swiftly to my loved one fly!

Unseen spirits, take my heart,
Filled with love's undying flame,
With it to my love depart,
Tell, oh, tell her whence it came!

SEA-SIDE THOUGHTS

I LOVE at times to leave the dust and din
Of city streets, and, standing on the shore,
To listen idly to the surge and roar
Of storm-lashed billows. There I seem to find
A balm and solace for the weary mind,
A potent draught to cool the feverish brain,
And charm away all weariness and pain!

I love when sunset paints the clouds with fire,
And pours through western rifts its floods of
gold,

Or when, far off, beyond the ocean rim,
The mellow harvest moon lifts up her head,
And touches all the waves with fairy light,
To stand bare-headed on some lofty crag
And hear the glad breeze whistle freely by,
Bathing in fragrant coolness lips and brow;
To gaze in silence o'er the vast expanse
Of azure waters, flecked with snowy foam,
And mark the lights and shades, the transient
gleams,

A distant glory on the changeeful sea,
A silver isle, a sparkling lane of gold;
To watch the billows, like an invading host
Rush on in serried ranks to storm the cliffs,
And hurl their bulk against the echoing rocks;
Though aye repulsed and baffled, knowing not
To own defeat, but still by night and day

Returning to the charge with crash and roar ;
Here, with a boom of cannon, shooting up
In spouts of hissing foam that momentarily
Gleam, ere they fall, with softest emerald hue ;
Here surging, seething, boiling, cauldron-like,
In narrow gullies, where on days of calm
The eye can pierce the clear, translucent depths,
And see the red rocks greening 'neath the wave.

I love to watch the sea-gulls circling high
Like straying snow-flakes in a summer sky ;
Now poised aloft like some aerial thing,
Now sailing up the wind on steady wing,
Now swooping down, with wild and stormy cries,
To touch the wave and seize the scaly prize !

THE MORNING STAR

ONE morning, in the twilight hour, I stood
Upon a headland looking o'er the deep,
Bare-headed, while the sea-breeze whistling by
Cool and refreshing fanned my fevered brow
And sent new life pulsing thro' every vein.
Sweet was it after hours of sleeplessness,
Of weary vigil vexed with anxious thought,
To drink that vastness, and to hear the voice
Huge, multitudinous, of the great deep
Rising and falling on that rock-bound shore.
Dark at my feet the billows roared and moaned,
Dashing their bulk in spouts of ghostly foam
Against the shelving rocks; while overhead,
Watch-weary, paling, shone the patient stars.
Far out before me, glimmering league on
league,
With here and there a snowy sail scarce seen
In the faint light, stretched the vast waste of
waters.
And there, before, low in the eastern sky,
Where glowed the first faint flush of coming
morn,
Blazed one great star, pure, limpid, wonderful,
Washed in that glow from every earthly stain,
A burnished jewel on dawn's roseate brow,—
The star of morning, herald of the day!
And as I gazed upon it, soul-entranced,

And drank its splendor, lo, a spirit came
Down the faint silver track athwart the sea,
And touched my aching brow, and whispered,
Peace!

And lo, the burden passed, and hope returned,
And God was with me, and the brighter day
Already shone beyond the bourne of night!
O, morning star, symbol of purity!
O, morning star, symbol of conqu'ring hope!
O, star that gazest on the unclouded sun
While yet the world is bathed in darkling
night!

O, morning star, symbol of deathless youth!
O, star that knows no setting, but dost melt
Calmly like some translated, holy soul,
Into the broadening splendor of the day!
O, morning star, rise thou upon my soul,
Dispel its darkness with thy stainless beams!
Shine thou, O star, for ever in my sky,
When night is darkest, when defeat seems nigh,
When toil, and care, and sorrow crush the
heart!

Give me the hope that conquers death and hell!
Give me the life that time nor loss can age!
Be thou, O morning star, my pilot star
To guide me safe o'er life's tempestuous sea,
And draw me up thy lane of silver beams
Upward, still upward to the throne of God!

ABELARD TO HELOISE

STILL in my dreams I meet thee everywhere,
As I was wont to in the gladsome past,
Thy form as beautiful, thy face as fair,
As when I saw thee last!

Last night, as I was wandering lone and sad
A-through the shadowy realms of kindly sleep,
Methought thou camest towards me blithe and
glad, —
And I could only weep!

The vague, half-conscious thought that lost
and dead
Were all my cherished hopes, still haunted me,
Like some dim spectre that with wings out-
spread
Darkens the pure, bright sky!

And so I could not feel the blissful joy
That in thy presence I was wont to feel,
For, blending with it like a base alloy,
I knew it was not real!

And thou didst speak to me so tenderly,
So good, so gentle, and so kind, thou wast,
So glad and sweet thy smile, that, woe is me!
My tears flowed doubly fast!

But then methought that side by side we sate,
And talked about the happy days gone by;
And my heart beat as it had beat of late,—
 With joy and hope beat high!

But though our intercourse so sweet did seem,
A strange restraint still rested on us twain, —
The haunting thought that it was but a dream,
 And I had loved in vain!

So when the moment came that we must part,
I gently kissed thy hand with bended head;
Then turned away, and with a bursting heart,
 Into the darkness fled!

Thus I awoke, and lo, it was a dream,
A strange, sweet, bitter dream, of memory born!
But darker to my waking eyes doth seem
 The joyless light of morn!

SOLOMON

I WELL remember that bright summer day, —
How long ago? I scarcely like to think;
But these white locks were black luxuriant curls,
And these dull orbs were, as the eagle's, keen,
And this bent form was straight, and this grey
chin

Was soft and smooth, nor showed the budding
down,

I well remember my royal father came,
More thoughtful than his wont, and took my
hand,

And drew me to him till I almost felt
His breath upon my forehead. Tenderly
His hand across my curls he passed, and sat
Gazing upon me with those wondrous eyes, —
Those eyes so full of grace and kingly power, —
Those eyes that now could melt a woman's heart,
Now strike with terror e'en the fiercest foe!
Silent he sat for long, his eyes on mine,
Looking me through and through, as if he read
The secret depths of my proud, boyish heart.
In conscious innocence I met his glance
With fearless, open gaze; and as I looked,
My young heart swelled with love and filial
pride

To know that man my sire,—that man so royal,
So strong and wise, so rich in every grace,

So much a king in every point and part.
Thus sat my father, wrapt in silent thought,
And gazing on me fondly ; till at length,
Well-satisfied, he broke the silence thus :—
“ My son, I love thee for thy mother’s sake,
And for the sake of him, the elder-born,
Whose place thou fillest, whom the good God
took.

Nor less I love thee for thyself, for thou
Art wise beyond thy years ; and in thy face
I see the promise of a noble life.
The future is before thee ; use it well ;
Fill it with holy thoughts and noble deeds ;
Live for the right, and seek to slay the wrong.
More godly than thy sire, avoid his sins,
And emulate alone his famous deeds.
Thou art thy country’s hope ; on thee depends
The future of this people. David’s crown
Descends upon thy head ; may David’s fame
Be far outshone by David’s greater son !
Make God thy guide, the guardian of thy
youth,
And serve him aye with undivided heart,—
The mighty Jah, who through these many years
Has been the strength of Israel,—raised him up
From cruel bondage to a high renown,
And trained him for His own with patient
love ; —
The God who took thy father from the folds

And crowned the humble shepherd Israel's
king,—

Who taught his hands to war, and made them
strong

To crush and conquer all the neighbouring
kings.

Make *Him* thy Lord, and look to Him for light,
For wisdom, guidance, power, all needed grace!

Flee every youthful lust, the lust for gold,
The lust for wine, the lust for woman's charms.

'Gainst every gust of passion stand thou firm
As cedar tree on lofty Lebanon,

When up the valleys from the western sea
The tempests rush, and drive the drifting rain.

Lose not thy strength in soft voluptuousness,
Forgetting 'midst the pleasures of the court

The toils and duties of the anointed king.

Be just and wise. Live for thy country's weal.
Judge thou in truth and equity, that all

Who love the right, may find thee still their
friend.

Be thou the shepherd of the flock of God,
Strong to protect and wise to rule and guide,
Slaying each rav'ning beast that prowls by
night;

That all the sheep, full-fed, may dwell secure
In pastures green, 'midst softly flowing
streams!

So shall the land beneath thy sway have peace!

So shall the valleys sing, and every field
Be clothed with plenty, and the hills rejoice
With waving corn and flow with ruddy wine!
So shall the people bless thee, and thy name
Be handed down to all posterity
As wisest of the wise, thy country's pride,
The 'stablisher of David's house and throne!"

And I, full gazing in that kingly face,
Thrilled at his words, and all my soul rushed out
In this one cry, "So help me, God, I will!
No blot through me shall stain my father's
fame!

No gem through me shall fall from David's
crown!"

Then suddenly, as if a gust of wind
Should catch a leaf and whirl it through the
sky,

The Spirit came upon me, and I stood
Bare-headed, open-eyed, like one entranced.
Swift as a long-pent torrent bursting forth
And leaping from a chasm in the hills,
Words rushed upon me,—strange and mystic
words, —

Words that I understood not, — words of fire!
And as I spake, my father bowed his head,
And whispered softly, "'Tis the voice of God."

"A golden glory skirts the Eastern hills, —
The heights of Moab gleam with liquid fire!
The hosts of God advance in serried ranks

With glittering spears and wings of light unfurled!

The clouds burst open! Through the shining rift

The floods of splendour rolling wave on wave
Fill all the heav'ns and wrap the sleeping earth!

“Awake, awake! Arise, O land, and sing!

A silver sea breaks on a golden shore!

A murmuring music fills the fragrant air!

The woods are honey, and the hills are wine!

The desert blooms, and every barren waste

Resounds with shouts and songs of harvest home!

Awake, awake, and hail the golden dawn!

“He stands in Zion! Lo, a countless host

From every land, with gifts and songs of praise,

Throng to His feet, and own His gracious sway.

A King of kings and Lord of lords is He;

Fair as the morning, glorious as the sun,

Blending sweet gentleness with kingly grace,

And in His eyes a wondrous light of love!

“The vision changes! All the glowing East

Is wrapt in darkness. Thro' the deep'ning gloom

A sound of tears is heard, a wailing cry!

A weird and awful shadow comes and goes,

A formless shape athwart the shuddering land!

And lo, a wounded hand, a pool of blood,

A pale and bleeding face that smiles in death!
“But hark! across the gloom, a trumpet-
voice,
“*Thro’ death to life; thro’ suffering to a
crown.*”
The gates of heaven roll back; the glory
gleams;
And angels, choir on choir, rejoicing sing.
And lo, from height to height, from shore to
shore,
A sonorous hallelujah rolls and swells;
And heaven and earth are blent in praise and
prayer!”

So spake I, scarcely knowing what I spake,
God was the spokesman, I the passive tool.
God’s finger swept the strings, and the harp
sang!
God breathed upon the lute, and music came!
And when I ceased, my father raised his head,
And once again, “It is the voice of God,
A vision of the time that is to be!
A vision of the King that is to come!
A vision of the suffering, pain, and woe
The true King bears to save and bless His
own!”

Oft have I thought since then of that strange
scene,
Oft have I pondered what those words might
mean,

Oft have I questioned when that day would
dawn,

And God raise up the promised Saviour-King.

Was I that king? Nay, child, I basely fell,

And by my sins called down the wrath of God.

Nobly my reign began. The arts of peace

All throve and flourished, and the land had rest.

The people blessed me, and the needy poor

Called me their father. Like a swelling sea

The joyous crowds would throng where'er I
passed,

And rend the trembling air with shouts of
praise.

My coming to a town made holiday,

And every village, when they knew me near,

Came forth in festal garb with dance and song,

To drag my chariot o'er a path of flowers!

God gave me wealth and wisdom. All the world

Gaped at my glory. Kings and queens from
far

Thronged to my court, or sought with costly
gifts

To win my favour. Foreign commerce throve,

And gold, like water, flowed thro' all the land.

The very soil seemed blessed, and year by year

A rich return repaid the tiller's toil.

All that the heart could wish, and more, had I,

Renown, and wealth, and peace, and public
praise!

But with it all, my heart was turned aside.
I yielded to the softness of the times,
I spent the days in luxury and ease,
And wine and women drained my manhood's
strength.

Each lovely maid that chanced to please my eye
I claimed as wife or royal concubine;
Till, sated with my lust, my heart grew hard,
And in my pride I left my father's God.
My time was passed in soft uxoriousness,
The council board neglected for the feast.
At pleasure's call I shirked the toils of state,
And quenched the wisdom which had dazed the
world.

The widow and the orphan cried in vain
For tardy justice. Officers of state
Robbed and oppressed the people; and the poor
With haggard faces called aloud for bread.

Then retribution came. Alas, too late,
I learnt my folly. All is lost, is lost,
The wealth, the skill, the fame, the people's
love!

The glory of the kingdom fades and falls!
No more the noisy crowds with loud acclaim
Hail me their saviour; but, where'er I go,
Averted looks, and sullen, downcast eyes,
And muttered curses! Foreign potentates
No longer court me; but throughout the land
Sedition reigns and dark rebellion broods.

And thus my day, that dawned so bright, now
sets

Midst gath'ring storms and presages of woe!

Art *thou* that king, Abijam? Ah, sweet
child,

Thou hast my father's eyes and noble brow;

Nor sin nor lust as yet have tainted thee.

The future all is thine, as once 'twas mine;

How wilt thou use it? Boy, be warned in time,

And shun the sins that made thy grandsire
mourn.

Art thou the king to come, Abijam?—he

Foreseen in vision, who shall one day reign

In peace and righteousness, and bless the world?

God knows. Let bide His time. His way is best.

When *He* sees good, the promised king will
come!

Come nearer, child; these weary eyes grow
dim.

There, turn thee to the light, and place thy
head,

So sunned with curls, beneath these trembling
hands.

Thy father's father's blessing rest on thee!

And all the might of David be with thee!

And all the neighb'ring nations bow to thee!

And God's own smile be ever bent on thee!

I cannot see thee! All the room grows dark!
Where art thou? Come. I stretch my hands in
vain!

All things elude me! Ah! Farewell, farewell!

DE PROFUNDIS

WHAT matters it whether we live or die?

The grave is dark, but life is darker still.

We look for good, and nothing find but ill:

We look for light, and lo, a starless sky!

What profits it to struggle for the right? —

To toil and struggle for a sounding phrase?

What profits it to tread in virtue's ways? —

So soon we vanish in eternal night!

Hope rising lark-like o'er man's sad estate,

Tints with a rosy splendor life's dark dream:

But sorrows still come thronging o'er the soul,

As billows, swol'n by tempest, darkly roll

Above a sunken ship. And all things seem

Ruled by a blind, and cold, and heartless Fate!

IN EXCELSIS

ALL things are fair in this bright world of
God's:

All life is beautiful with joy and love;
From suns and stars that march thro' heav'n
above

To flow'rs, and blades of grass, and lifeless
clods!

All things are beautiful, and he who hath
An ear attuned to heavenly harmonies,
Will hear sweet music breathing from the
skies,

And ever circling round his daily path!

Thro' all creation runs a perfect plan,
Beauty and love are writ on every page.
In the dread silence of eternity,
God, like a patient Craftsman, sits on high,
Weaving the gorgeous fabric age by age,
Or stoops in love to dwell with mortal man!

LOVE, THE INTERPRETER

Love, they tell us, cannot see;
Love is blind, the poet cries.
But it always seems to me
Love hath twenty pairs of eyes!

Hate alone is really blind:
With a veil of sombre hue,
Both its squinting eyes are lined
Shutting all things fair from view.

Gentle love can quick discover
What no other eye can see;
And a man must be a lover
If he'd learn life's mystery!

If the world h'd understand, —
Catch the music of the hours, —
See the light on sea and land, —
Learn the truth of birds and flowers, —

If he'd see the mystic grace
Binding all the earth in one, —
If he'd gaze on nature's face
Smiling at the laughing sun, —

If he'd learn what nature saith
In her myriad changing moods, —
When the night with odorous breath
Stirs the boskage of the woods, —

When the stars like angels' eyes
Sleeplessly their vigils keep,
Weaving mystic harmonies
While the world is wrapt in sleep, —

When the morning, dewy sweet,
Paints the clouds with liquid fire,
Treads the hills with rosy feet,
Wakes all life to fresh desire, —

When the choirs of happy birds
Fill the woodland aisles with song,
And the flocks and lowing herds
Move with lingering feet along, —

When the long waves beat the shore,
Breaking, breaking ceaselessly,
Murmuring for evermore
Some wild secret of the sea, —

When the tender evening light
Glowe, and melts, and glows again,
Whispering of sad delight,
Whispering of blissful pain, —

He must love. For sure 'tis love
Forms the universal frame!
God, in stooping from above
That he might wild chaos tame,

Called in love to aid his strength, —
Made it his creative thought, —
And the world emerged at length
Everywhere with love in-wrought!

Hence 'tis he who loves alone,
Who can learn life's mystery;
He alone is nature's son,
He alone has eyes to see!

He who loves has sympathy
Both with nature and with God;
He who loves not cannot see
Half the flow'rs that skirt his road!

TWO EYES

BLUE, as blue as the heavens above,
Bright and shining like two twin skies,
Well fit to be the temples of love
Are those sweet eyes, are those sweet eyes!

So full of meaning, so full of thought:
Each changing passion within them lies;
A thousand sorrows and joys are caught
Within those eyes, within those eyes!

Now anger leaps from their flashing orbs;
Now love within them languishes, dies!
Their liquid poetry my soul absorbs,
Those gracious eyes, those gracious eyes!

Their glances intoxicate like wine;
Their beauty the painter's brush defies;
Brighter than morning stars they shine,
Those peerless eyes, those peerless eyes!

REJECTED

MY heart is like an autumn wood
Thro' which the restless breezes sigh
And toss the dead leaves far and nigh
Like hungry dogs in search of food!

The sere leaves thickly strew the ground,
Or falling, leave the branches bare;
And, damp and chill, the even air
Creeps round the trunks with mournful sound!

A thousand loathsome creatures come
From out their lairs with dismal cry;
The owlet hoots across the sky,
The wolf makes answer thro' the gloom!

It was not always thus. The spring
All life and love once lingered there;
And all day long the sunny air
Was hushed to hear the mavis sing!

With bursting buds the trees were bright,
With thousand flowers the sward was gay,
And joy and hope the live-long day
Danced in the flick'ring golden light!

And night was then as glad as noon ;
The evening star shone sweet and pale ;
In rapture wild the nightingale
Poured forth its love beneath the moon !

But ere the summer had begun,
The cruel blasts of winter fell,
And turned my heaven into hell,
Ere half the year's career was run !

Hope spread her wings, and flew away,
And left me in my grief to burn :
Joy vanished never to return,
When she I loved did say me nay !

Time hastens on : the hours flit by :
But spring will ne'er come back again.
I needs must lift my load of pain,
I needs must bear my misery !

FRANCES O'FLANNIGAN,
SEAMSTRESS

FRANCES O'FLANNIGAN, seamstress, of thirty-two Paradise Alley,
Found in her room by the neighbours, dead
('twas the morning of Christmas),
Lying so still and so white on a bundle of
straw in the corner;
Peacefully sleeping, they thought, till they
touched her, and lo, she was marble!
Peacefully praying, they thought, for her
thin hands were crossed on her bosom!
Coldly the grey morning dawned, and peeped
thro' the rickety window;
Coldly the grey morning light crept thro' the
desolate chamber, —
Only a broken-down chair, and a box that had
served for a table;
Never a stick in the grate, and never a crust
in the cupboard,
Never a blanket to warm her, but only her
poor tattered garment!
There like a statue she lay, Francis O'Flannigan,
seamstress,
Sleeping that long, dreamless sleep; and over
her thin, sunken features
Almost a smile seemed to play, as if she were
talking with angels!

Rough were the neighbours and careless,
 prostitutes, swearers, and drunkards,
Coarse, slouching, ill-favoured men, and slat-
 ternly, dirty-faced women.
But as they came one by one, and looked on
 the face of the seamstress,
Hushed were their voices, and softly they
 spoke to each other in whispers ;
Gently on tip-toe they passed from the cham-
 ber with awe-stricken faces,
Silenced, and awed, and subdued, as if they
 had looked on an angel !
Coldly the grey morning dawned, and
 wakened the slumbering city, —
Peeped into warm, happy homes, which were
 filled with the laughter of children, —
Peeped into rooms where the tables were
 loaded with gifts, and the fires
Leapt up the chimneys and painted the ceil-
 ings with flickering shadows !
Coldly the grey morning dawned ; and lo,
 from the tall, silent steeples,
Burst with a crash and a roar the tumult of
 loud-clashing hammers, —
Rushed from the wide metal throats of the
 bells, as they swung in the belfries,
Music that rose flood on flood, till the very air
 trembled with gladness, —
Rising, and falling, and swelling, all jubi-
 lant, joyous, triumphant,

Bidding men wake and rejoice, for to-day is
the birth of the Saviour!

But Frances O'Flannigan, seamstress, lay
dead on the straw in her garret, —

Never a stick in the grate, and never a crust
in the cupboard!

“Peace,” sang the choristers there in the great
stately church round the corner, —

“Peace on the earth, and goodwill, and glory to
God in the highest.”

“Peace,” read the tall, stately priest, as he
stood by the great brazen eagle,

“Peace, for in Bethlehem-Judah, this day there
is born the Redeemer.”

But Frances O'Flannigan, seamstress, lay
dead with her hands on her bosom.

“Died from a weakness of heart, but hastened
by cold and privation,”

So said the coroner's jury; and there in the
papers next morning,

“Sad death from hunger,” they said, “of
Frances O'Flannigan, seamstress,” —

Only six lines and a half, on the third page,
low down in the corner.

Only six lines? — quite enough for the death
of a poor friendless woman!

Nearly a page for the speech, the big-mouth-
ing lies of the statesman;

Fully *two* pages for sport, for betting, and
racing, and boxing;

One for "Last Scenes" in the life of the villain committed for murder;
 Half one or more for the dresses they wore at Her Majesty's levee;
 But ah! for the slow tragic end of Frances O'Flannigan, seamstress,
 Only six lines and a half, and a passing expression of pity!
 Only a seamstress! Who cares though the light of that jubilant morning
 Fell on a white, haggard face, and the voice of the bells in the belfries
 Wakened her not, though they cried,
 "Awake, 'tis the birth of the Saviour!"
 Only a seamstress! Who cares though for years she has fought with starvation,
 Laboured from morning till night in her garret despairing and cheerless,
 Working her hands to the bone, like a slave that is chained to the galleys, —
 Yielding her blood drop by drop to the demons of fashion and cheapness!
 "Died from starvation," say they? — "*Murdered*" 's the verdict of Heaven, —
 Murdered by Sleek, the fat draper, and *you*, my fine ladies of fashion!
Only a seamstress? Ah, no! — but a child of the one common Father!
 Only a *seamstress*? — a woman, with love in her heart and compassion, —

Love like the love of the Christ who laid down
His life for His brothers!
Come from your churches and chapels, ye
worshippers lowly adoring;
Come to this chamber of death, this garret so
bare and so cheerless;
Come, for no spot in the land is this morning
more sacred, more holy;
Come, for the Spirit of Jesus is lingering
here in the stillness!
Angels keep watch round thy couch, O, Fran-
ces O'Flannigan, seamstress;
Angels shall guard thy poor corse, for thine
was the heart of a hero!
Poor little Molly, the cripple, lay dying
from wasting consumption, —
Molly, who lived down the stair in a room
that looked out on the alley,—
Molly, whose stepmother drank, and whose
father had gone to the country;
So Molly was left all alone, to die in the cold
and the darkness!
Frances the seamstress had slaved for months
for a miserable pittance;
Now she'd a poor sixpence left to last her for
nearly a fortnight, —
With never a stick in the grate and never a
crust in the cupboard!
Molly and Frances were friends; for often
when Molly was tossing,

Restless, and fevered, and weak, as the chill
days grew shorter and shorter,
Frances would come to her side, with soft
words and gentle caresses.
Now, on this drear Christmas eve, Molly the
cripple lay dying, —
Dying alone in the dark, with no one to com-
fort and tend her;
Moaning and gasping for breath, she gazed
at the pitiless darkness!
Frances, a shivering shadow, went down to
the street with her sixpence, —
Purchased some coals and some soup, and
with them returned to the chamber.
Soon on the cold cheerless grate a fire was
merrily dancing;
Soon on the bare empty hob a basin of soup
was a-steaming!
Frances had spent her last penny to comfort
the poor dying cripple, —
“Only to cheer her a bit: she was lonely,” she
said to a neighbour.
Then for three long weary hours she sat with
the child by the fire,
Soothing her cough with the soup, and whis-
pering softly of heaven, —
Sat till the poor head sank down in rest on
the poor little bosom, —
Sat till the quick breathing ceased, and the
spirit had gone to its Maker!

Up to her garret she crept, and lay on the
 straw in the corner, —
 Lay there in hunger and cold, till a feeling
 of numbness came o'er her, —
 Lay there and thought about Molly, till, just
 as the morning was dawning,
 Lo, she had fallen asleep, for God's holy fin-
 ger had touched her!
 'Peace,' sang the choristers there in the great,
 stately church round the corner;
 Peace? — yes, for *her* there is peace, —
 peace from her toiling and weeping, —
 Peace from the long, hopeless struggle with
 poverty, cold, and starvation, —
 Peace, for her Christmas has dawned in that
 heaven where Molly awaits her!
Only a seamstress, a clod, a poor, wretched,
 woe-begone creature? —
 Look at the smile on her face! My friend, 'tis
 the face of an angel!
 Give her the grave of a pauper, — no head-
 stone, no marble, no flowers,
 Only a green, nameless mound. But in heaven
 her record is written:
 'Frances O'Flannigan, seamstress, who walked
 in the steps of the Master.'

LONGING

I stood beside the voiceful shore
And listened to the sea's complaint:
Methought it sounded low and faint;
And sadder far than e'er before!

A mist is resting on the sea
And clasps it like a silver shroud;
The sky is wrapt in sombre cloud, —
An evening sad as sad can be!

Yet not so sad; for still thy face
Smiles on me thro' the mist of pain,
And bids me hope that I may gain
Within thy heart a warmer place!

Yet here I stand alone, alone, —
The sea beneath, the sky above, —
I have no surety of thy love,
I cannot call thy heart my own!

“THREE MONTHS’ HARD LABOR”

OH, the pitiful, pitiful tale!

Oh, the story of sorrow and wrong! —
Of womanhood erring and frail,—

Of the weak trampled down by the strong!

“ Three months’ hard labor!—Take her away!”

Is there no pity for such as she?

Shivering, ragged, and old, and grey,

Shrunken and blear-eyed — a sight to see!

“ Three months’ hard labor!” — Well, who will
care?

Take her away to the prison cell!

Who has a pitying tear to spare

For one who is certain to burn in hell?

“ Take her away!” — Such refuse and scum

Is really not worth a passing thought.

She has drowned her soul in her gin and
rum —

Take the besotted old hag from Court!

“ Three months’ hard labor!”—The people jeer,

As the wretched creature, with timorous
glance

Clasps her old hands in impotent fear,

And asks his Worship to give her a chance.

“Three months’ hard labor!” — And is there
none

’Mongst those hard-faced men and those
women bold,

To feel just a spark of pity for one
So poor and friendless, so feeble and old?

You dainty damsel who lift your skirt
And press to the wall as she passes by,
As if she were only so much dirt,
A lower creature than you or I, —

Do not loath her, and treat her with scorn;
She once like you was a damsel fair;
In the op’ning blush of her life’s fresh morn
She was pure and joyous, and free from
care!

But, ah! there was one she loved too well, —
Trusted him utterly, — gave him her all!
And he, like a devil let loose from hell,
Planned and plotted to compass her fall!

He lured her on with his hellish wiles:
Under vows of love he cloaked his lust:
With his whispered words and his honeyed
smiles
He conquered her heart and gained her
trust!

She did what he told her like a slave;
She thought him too noble to deceive:
And so at length she foolishly gave
The best that a woman has to give!

'Twas a moment of weakness, and she fell;
She freely gave him all he could claim!
Poor, trusting child, she had loved too well,
And her love had brought her — sin and
shame!

First he deceived her, and then betrayed;
And when he had worked his wicked will,
With a laugh and sneer he cast her aside,
And left her alone, disgraced and ill!

Ruined and wretched, she made her way
Back to her father's home again:
He sternly refused to let her stay,
And turned her out in the wind and rain!

What could she do, and where could she go?
Penniless, friendless, without a home; —
Left all alone in her shame and woe,
Where could her weary footsteps roam?

Then in her anguish her mind gave way;
With blank, vacant face she wandered
about, —

Aimlessly walked for a night and a day,
Till the Poor Law Guardians found her
out.

In the pauper asylum they placed her then,
A gibbering idiot without a name!
Years after, her reason came back again,
And with it the weight of her woe and
shame.

So they opened the door, and set her free,
Free to wander the wide world o'er!
A poor, half-witted creature was she, —
Her strength was gone, — she was young
no more!

What could she do? — No eye to pity,
No friend to help her, no hand to save!
Lost in the bustle and din of the city,
She found it nought but a living grave!

What could she do? — The world is cruel,
It has no corner for such as she.
Men only laughed at the poor, old fool;
They only made fun of her misery!

Shrunk her body and grey her hair,
Even the streets had nothing to give!
A copper here and a copper there,
Begging and working, she managed to
live!

Hungry and wretched, she longed to die, —
She took to the bottle to drown her grief.
Who shall blame her? shall you or I? —
'Twas the only way she could find relief!

And so she went from bad to worse; —
Lower and lower she sunk, until
The rum and gin, with their fiery curse,
Had drowned her reason and quenched her
will!

Starving one day, in her sorry plight
She snatched a loaf from a baker's van,
And carefully hiding it out of sight,
Away down the nearest close she ran.

Away, away! — But the hue and cry
Was quickly up; and they ran her down!
Her guilt was patent to every eye,
For they found the loaf wrapt up in her
gown!

Through a jeering, hooting mob she was led
Away to the Court that very day.
“Three months' hard labor,” his Worship said;
“A lenient sentence. Take her away!”

“Three months!” — And so it has come to this,
That life that began so fair and bright!

She sinned, ah, yes! and acted amiss;
But who will dare say that it serves her
right?

Not He, I trow, the Tender and True,
The holy and just One who rules above,
Who knoweth our frame, our weaknesses too,
And follows our steps with infinite love!

“Three months’ hard labor.” — No human eye
Will shed a single pitying tear!
But the Father of all who dwells on high
May reckon her still His daughter dear!

And when she appears before His throne,
Who can tell what the judgment will be?
“The sin and the guilt were but half thine own:
Much hast thou suffered. I welcome thee!”

Oh, the pitiful tale of sin!
Oh, the story of cruelty and lust!
But God has more pity than sinful men,
And God knew her weakness, and God is
just!

SONG

MY HEART is sad, because thou art
So cold to me, so cold to me:
And yet I still must love thee well, —
I'd die for thee, I'd die for thee!

I'd wander all the country o'er
For many a mile, for many a mile,
Till wearied out and all foot-sore,
To win thy smile, to win thy smile!

I'd rather hear thy gentle voice
Speak one kind word, speak one kind word,
Than listen to the sweetest strains
That e'er were heard, that e'er were heard!

I'd prize one gentle, loving look
From those sweet eyes, from those sweet
eyes,
'Bove all the joys that Adam found
In Paradise, in Paradise!

And if thou wilt not learn to love, '
I'll love thee still, I'll love thee still;
And though thou'rt cold, I'll ever seek
To do thy will, to do thy will!

NOONTIDE.

SOFTLY, softly, like the lilting
Sound of bells at eventide,
O'er the long-drawn yellow shingle
Came the murmur of the tide;
And the whisper of the woodlands
Rose, and fell, and, falling, died!

Scarce a motion stirred the stillness
Of the sultry summer air,
Save the whirring of a partridge
Startled from its hidden lair,
Or the swish that told the reaper
With his scythe was passing near.

Faintly, faintly thro' the stillness,
Borne at moments on the breeze,
Came the voice of falling waters
From the distant upland leas,
Mingling sweetly with the breathing
Soft and low of sleeping trees!

All the heavy air was laden
With the pinewood's faint perfume, —
Odors from a thousand flowers,
Lilies, roses, golden broom, —
While a richer scent was wafted
From the nooks where violets bloom!

E'en the very insects slumbered
Thro' those drowsy, dreamy hours,
And a low, melodious humming
Rose from beds of woodland flowers:
While the sleepy songsters twittered
To their mates in sylvan bowers!

Like a free, unfettered spirit
Poised aloft on fluttering wing,
In the liquid depths of azure
Lost to sight the lark did sing,—
Heavenly music wafted earthward,
As the angels sweep the string!

Sweeter far than woodland voices,
Sweeter far than bird or flower,
Mother's tiny two-year rose-bud
Soundly slept that noontide hour,
Arms outstretched so plump and rosy,
Sunny curls, a golden dower!

MEMORIAL DAY

HEROIC Dead! We celebrate to-day
The deeds ye wrought, the blows ye bravely
 struck,
The wounds ye gladly bore for freedom's sake!
We place to-day with tears our floral wreaths
Upon your tombs. We wreath your memories—
Ye who are laid in unknown, nameless graves
On many a bloody, hard-fought battle-field —
With tender thoughts, and gratitude too deep
For empty words. Heroic Dead, sleep on!
And while the world endures, a grateful land
Shall celebrate your deeds, nor fail to tell
To children's children how ye fought and bled
That this great Commonwealth from sea to sea
Should stand united, one, compacted, free;
That this fair land, founded by Freedom's sons
In Freedom's holy name, for Freedom's sake,
Should be a land of freemen, not of slaves!
Heroic Dead, sleep on! Your fame is grav'n
On history's deathless page: your deeds shall
 live
In poet's song, when monuments of stone
Have crumbled into dust!
 To you, brave Dead,
To you, the common soldiers in the ranks,
To you, the boys in blue who held the trench,
Who hungered, thirsted, marched, who joked
 and sang,

Who faced the shot and shell, and charged the
heights,
And, still obedient, made a tryst with death, —
To you we owe our country and our homes,
To you we owe our liberties, to you
We owe our greatness and prosperity!
Heroic Dead! To-day we celebrate
With grateful tears, the mighty work ye
wrought
For liberty, for conscience, and for God!
Ye died to save your country. Let us live
That we may serve her, — serve her with our
strength,
Our zeal, our wealth, our courage, and our love!
Ye gave your lives to set the negro free;
Let us give ours to free the slaves of lust,
The slaves of drink, the slaves of human greed!
Ye fought to keep this land secure and strong:
Let us, too, fight to make it pure and great, —
Fight not with sword, and spear, and cannon's
roar,
But with the voice, the pen, the ballot box, —
Fight till the giant evils of the time,
The hoary wrongs, shall totter to their fall, —
Till justice, honor, righteousness shall reign
Where'er Old Glory flutters in the breeze!
Heroic Dead, well wrought ye! From your hands
We take the stainless banner, lift it high
That all may read, "For country and for God."

We bear it onward, upward, onward still,
To larger, grander, nobler victories!
Sleep on, heroic Dead, your sacrifice,
Your toil, your blood, your wounds were not in
vain,
Nor shall be, while the rolling years revolve
And noble hearts respond to noble deeds!



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